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TRIBUTE  
TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
C. B. ROBINSON ESQ.

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A T R I B U T E

TO

THE MEMORY

OF THE LATE

C. B. ROBINSON, ESQ.

OF LEICESTER.

BY

J. P. MURSELL.

LONDON:

E. MARLBOROUGH AND CO.

LEICESTER: R. JACKSON.

1862.

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THE FOLLOWING LINES,  
THE SUBSTANCE OF AN EXTEMPORE DISCOURSE,  
*Published by Request,*  
ARE DEDICATED,  
WITH SENTIMENTS OF AFFECTIONATE ESTEEM,  
TO THE BEREAVED WIDOW AND MOURNING FAMILY  
AND FRIENDS OF THE LATE  
CHARLES BURT ROBINSON, ESQ.,  
IN WHOM THE WRITER HAS LOST A JUDICIOUS COUNSELLOR  
AND A TRIED AND CONSTANT FRIEND.

LEICESTER,  
*April 10, 1862.*





A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
THE LATE C. B. ROBINSON, ESQ.

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1 THESSALONIANS IV. 14.

*"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."*

It is natural and seemly that we should mourn when our friends are taken from us. Indeed, the absence of grief on such occasions would be a reflection alike on our reason and our religion. But our sorrow is, of necessity, moderated by circumstances, and especially by the character of those whom we lose—by the esteem, the confidence, and the affection, they inspired while they lingered with us. The value of the life is the correct estimate of the loss which is sustained in death. The heathen were accustomed to attend their funereal rites—a practice which still prevails in superstitious lands—by fanatic and violent emotions, by loud moanings and wild gesticulations, and by everything which was suited to invade the sanctity of grief. Among other secondary benefits which an intelligent Christianity has conferred on society, we are entitled to enumerate the becoming sobrieties it imposes amidst the solemnities of death. It is highly probable that the Apostle had heard that some of his Thessalonian friends had lost those who were dear to them, and that, in their half-instructed state, they had yielded to the customs which prevailed around them; therefore he says, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that (with your more enlightened faith) ye

sorrow not as those who have no hope ; for if ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, even those also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

We are all, but especially bereaved persons who are imbued with a devout spirit, deeply interested in the condition of departed saints—with what becomes of pious men with whom we have "taken sweet counsel" on their way to the grave. Some entertain the opinion that they pass into a state of unconsciousness, that all activity is suspended, and that the mind sleeps with the body. This notion must not be confounded, for a moment, with the offensive dogma of annihilation, or the equally monstrous doctrine of absorption, taught by the pantheistic philosophy. The materialistic idea is not without its plausibility, and has received the sanction of devout and erudite men. This is not the time, or the occasion, for entering on a searching or elaborate discourse on this profound but inspiring theme, which seems to me, after all that has been written about it, to deserve and to await the patient and most thoughtful attention of some master hand. In offering a few words confirmatory of the opinion of those who believe that "we do not *all* die," it may be allowed me to observe, that the doctrine of unconsciousness—of decay—is not consonant with the nature and the attributes of mind. We cannot confound the intellectual with the physical, the instinctive with the moral, or the spiritual with the material. If we try to do it, we fail. It is like an attempt to merge one idea in another, to sink differences and to annihilate distinctions. The more carefully and severely we think about it, the more does the mind, whether in itself or in its functions, appear to differ from the tabernacle which holds and encumbers it. Reason, reflection, imagination, comparison ! what is there in these like width, or breadth, or length ? What like surface, hardness, thickness ? What is there in a bright and beautiful thought like a scintillation from a material lamp ? These things have their analogies, but they

have no resemblance ; they are diametrically and, we dare to say, infinitely unlike ; so that the accident of death, which dissolves the one—that is, the material frame—does not of *necessity* touch the other, the rational and moral nature, that being perfectly distinct in kind.

The position we are attempting to maintain is strengthened by the ascendancy of the mind over bodily infirmity. The beautiful though mysterious connexion between the two, with the mutual invasion of each other's domains under the accidents common to both in their incorporate association, is a subject far too abstruse for passing discussion. But this kind of inter-necine contest, this occasional pressure of the material on the spiritual, and this struggle of the latter to assert its claims, supplies subtle evidence in favour of a separate nature, a life within a life, an indwelling guest, who is interested in the completeness and solidity of the building in which he is lodged, but who is ready to retire when that building falls into decay. If the mind be identical with the body, they ought always to be affected by the same circumstances, and regulated by the same laws. As the one evaporates and declines, and its elasticity gives way, the other should be in exact sympathy with it, and should totter, and bend, and collapse. But frequently, and always but for abnormal disease, as ordinary infirmities and weaknesses invade the body, the mind is more thoughtful—as it were, more detached and isolated in its acts, and frequently more vigorous and brilliant. As the framework is quietly unbuilding, the immaterial nature becomes etherealised, the conscious agent ascends his throne, and the beautiful intellect gleams with unwonted radiance through the thin veil which invests it. Even were we to admit this to be an exception, which we are far from doing, it strengthens our cause and establishes our position—that the mind *can* triumph over the infirmities of the body. Surely no one will pretend that the pain which racks the victim of disease has its seat in the mind ;

that gout is swelling the judgment, that diphtheria wounds the imagination, or that erysipelas has seized on the conscience ! Notwithstanding this torture, the mind may be tranquil and composed, may be flushed with the hues of hope, may be investigating the causes of the pain, may assert a determined will, and rise nobly superior to it. None can confound the corporeal suffering with the mental action, or pretend that the mind necessarily succumbs to the evil which surrounds it. So, when the seeds of mortality begin to take root, when weakness invades us with such strength that we can no longer resist it, and the skill of the physician fails, under these circumstances how frequently does the mind look out upon the material devastation which is passing about it, and, sustained by the hope which the gospel of Christ inspires, plume its wings for its lofty flight to those ethereal mansions from which the emancipated spirit asserts its glorious ascendancy in its last struggle with physical infirmity.

Our minds even here, especially if they be cultivated, are unconscious of age ; they know nothing of periodical stages ; they never become grey or grow weary of their work. Unlike the appetites of the body, their tastes and preferences never wear out ; their longings are still fresh and onward. If their breathings are checked, it is not from within, but from without ; they repudiate inertia, and revolt from the cold touch of death. Mind is a thing of life, and in its healthy action aspires after immortality, thirsts for more self-consciousness, unless, indeed, it be so degraded that it is afraid of revelations to come. It is an enduring, spiritual thing—a quenchless essence, that does not invite even the decay that releases it ; for “we that are in this body do groan, being burdened, not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality should be swallowed up of life.” It is made for perpetuity, and carries within no provision for an interruption of being.

But if the difficulties attendant on the doctrine of conscious-

ness after death be the groundwork of objection to it, the opposite theory ought to be less embarrassed. Indeed, if the foregoing remarks have any weight, the sleeping scheme should possess high attractions to reconcile our judgments to it. But if, on examination, it should appear that the greater difficulty lies with the objector, then the argument is with us. Not that we pretend to be able to form any distinct idea of the state of departed saints, of the place of their abode, the modes of their intercourse, or the nature of their employment; over these a mystic veil is drawn, lest, dazzled by such splendours, we should be beguiled from the duties of earth. We have absolutely no knowledge, in the strict sense of the term, of the *circumstances* of the heavenly world. But if it be hard for us to conceive correctly of a conscious agent existing at all, separate from physical organization, how much more so to imagine such a being denuded of consciousness itself—stripped of that endowment without which it could not be mind at all. To pass, in thought, the boundary within which beatified saints, as they mingle with the seraphim and cherubim, reside, may baffle our skill; but to penetrate those sombre shades beyond which millions of the children of God, full of life and hope when with us, are supposed to be, as to their activities, in semi-annihilation, as in one vast dormitory, strangely augments the difficulty. If the mind sleep with the body, is it, like it, divided, dissipated, disrupted? If not—How? Where? When? What mean these slumbers? Are there no sounds loud enough, no thoughts mighty enough, no truths brilliant enough, to rouse these ethereal beings from their mystic repose? Our great Milton, for the honour of his intellect, had better, with his gloriously awakened faculties, been building up for the admiration of ages that wondrous fabric, his “Paradise Lost,” than be passing ages fast asleep in Paradise Regained. Beside the shock which this strange notion gives to our highest sensibilities under the loss of beloved friends, it seems to me to be beset with incomparably

greater improbabilities than the opposite and more cheering hypothesis.

In this high matter, however, our best evidence is supplied by the Word of God—that sacred testimony from which there is no appeal. Without detaining you by collecting and arranging the proof which it supplies, it must suffice to remind you of the incidental witness borne to it in the Old Testament writings, and of its prevalence as an item of belief on the part of devout Jews—of the discourses of our Lord—of the great events which happened in His life—of the appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount—of the reply of the Saviour to the thief on the cross—of such statements in the inspired oracles as, that “we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect”—of the glowing allusions amidst the apocalyptic splendours; the vision of the Apostle Paul in the third heavens, with his remarkable language to the Corinthians—“therefore, we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.” On this passage an acute writer says, that the Apostle clearly believed that his mind would be in a state of consciousness after death. He did not only believe it, my brethren, but in this passage he revealed it as a matter of inspiration, for his lips were touched as with a live coal from off Jehovah’s altar. Mind, these words distinctly teach us, survives in all its dignity beyond the tomb. Indeed, in my reverent belief, a finite intelligence, disencumbered from its fleshly companion, can no more sink into torpor, than the Infinite Spirit Himself can slumber on His throne.

But the spirits of departed saints, invigorated, not quenched in death, have passed into sanctuary; for the Apostle tells us that they “sleep in Jesus”—not simply in the way of nominal profession, or of accidental association, as men may be said to sleep in Confucius, or in Zoroaster, but in a vital and compre-

hensive sense. While on earth they committed themselves to His keeping, not under a passing impulse or as an occasional act, but by a divinely cherished habit, a settled and oft-repeated act of the mind. This constitutes one great distinction between nominal and real religion. We call ourselves after the name of Christ ; but we may do so while we have no communion with Him. Without such communion, whatever our pretensions, we are none of His ; and this consists, among other gracious exercises, in the humble and confiding resignation of our eternal interests to His care. Our friend who has been taken from us was distinguished by this habit. Many years ago, when in comparative youth, he felt his personal guilt and danger as a sinner in the sight of an infinitely holy God, and his consequent need of an interest in the expiatory sacrifice of the Great Redeemer of men, to whom he tremblingly fled for refuge ; this was but the beginning of a series of acts repeated through successive days and years. Amidst these acts, then, he has fallen asleep ; and is reaping the unspeakable benefit elsewhere of the habit so happily acquired here.

They rest with augmented complacency in the gospel of His grace. No change has occurred in the estimate which they formed of it on earth otherwise than in its confirmation and elevation. Departed saints do not escape from the torpor of death to learn that they have been following a delusion, a set of notions gendered amid the jargon of the schools, or in the airy realms of a dreamy imagination, but that they have embraced truths which belong to both worlds, which can bear the light, and invite the scrutiny of heaven. Whatever truths were essential to their happiness and to their "growth in grace" here, they dwell on with increased delight there ; the gospel which they loved on earth, which was to them "tidings of great joy," a cheering presence, a ministering agency, "all their salvation and all their desire," is heightened in their esteem now. The principles and spirit which their religion induced while on



their pilgrimage have become more unfolded now that they have reached its end. Happy, indeed, are they whose religious principles, opinions, and tastes, will not only bear the shock of death, but will shine forth with redoubled lustre beyond the shadows of the grave. We will not attempt to pierce the veil, and imagine him who was recently among us, and who delighted so much in the gospel of divine grace when on earth, as he is now resting in it with immortal complacency in heaven.

The New Testament, my brethren, is a covenant entered into by the Great Redeemer with all who believe in Him—it is a will, an engagement which has relation to the highest and most momentous interests that can occupy the human mind or kindle its aspirations. It contains promises, encourages hopes, unfolds prospects, which are all to be realized through the medium of faith. True believers do not doubt the things themselves, but they often fear their own interest in them ; they have confidence in the covenant, but they sometimes tremble lest they should not be embraced within it ; they are assured of the veracity of Him who has so graciously made it, but feel their own unworthiness of it ; if they rejoice in it, it is with trembling. But those who die in faith have it sealed to them in heaven ; they can no longer doubt ; their title is ratified and their tremulous spirits assured. We will not envy them, therefore, but gather up our garments and trace their footsteps to the skies, for in this divine sense, as in others, our departed friends have entered into rest.

It is always to my mind a painful and dismal thing to reflect on death, I mean, more especially on its physical phenomena ; nor are those to be envied who, from familiarity with it, grow callous to its frightful and repugnant features. It is the stigma of our nature, the blackening curse of sin ; and looked at simply through the eye of friendship, it staggers our reason, shocks our sensibilities, and almost at times destroys our faith. Verily, “ we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled ! ” That the stately forms, the beautiful shapes, and beaming faces,

with which we have been familiar, should, smitten by disease and by the fell hand of the destroyer, crumble into dust—that they should descend to those frightful haunts of ignominy and disgrace in which they are destined to see corruption—is a humiliating lesson to human pomp and pleasure and pride ; but even there, in their dissolution and decay, the bodies of departed saints are secure in their Saviour's hands. It is strange, indeed, in the language of South, “ that the jaws of death should relent, or the grave of all things make restitution ; that filth and rottenness should be the preparatives to glory, and dust and ashes the seed-plots of immortality ; that the sepulchre should be a place to dress ourselves in for heaven, the attiring-room for corruption to put on uncorruption, and fit us for the beatific vision.” But even so, “ for if ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, so those also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The Great Deliverer, exhausted by His mighty toil, took transient repose in the sepulchre, laid Himself down in our tomb, and sent a perfume through the caverns of the dead. It is true “ He could not be holden of it,” neither shall His followers—

“Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,  
 Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb ;  
 The Saviour has passed through its portals before thee,  
 And the light of His love is thy guide through the gloom.”

“ Precious, then (in every sense), in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints. Their dust sleeps beneath His eye, while they themselves are in sanctuary in the holiest of all. The grand pavilion has received them. Mighty bulwarks surround them. Their material and their spiritual interests are alike safe in the keeping of Him who has said, “ I am He who was dead but am alive again, and who liveth for evermore, and have the keys of death and of hell.”

But they not only have entered into sanctuary, they occupy a singularly advanced position. There is scarcely anything which more perplexes those who have little or no sympathy with evan-

gelical religion, and who are strangers to true piety, than the confessions of godly men. Such persons have no idea of sin, except as a deviation from approved customs, formal injunctions, and established morals. A decent observance of the precepts of the decalogue exempts men, in their esteem, from the class of transgressors. The man who is immersed in worldly pursuits, or who is consumed with covetousness, or who delights in oppression, will look down with pity upon his neighbour whose outward habits may be less correct than his own, and be ready to say, "Stand by; I am holier than thou." But "he feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside." Sin has its seat in the bosom, and may rankle and reign beneath the smoothest exterior the mere moralist can assume. The religious formalist, with all his punctilious airs, may be but as a sepulchre, whitened without, while within is "nothing but rottenness and dead men's bones." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" But those who believe "the truth," who are really under the influence of evangelical piety, perceive and feel "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and deplore the deep hold which it has on their natures; they mourn their distance from God, their want of right affection towards Him, and of conformity to Him. Looking at themselves in the light of His law, of His infinite holiness, and of His righteous claims, they feel utterly abashed and condemned, and habitually exclaim, "Against Thee, Thee only, have we sinned, and done evil in Thy sight." Sin as a *disease*—as a constantly deranging element, not as an occasional delinquency—burdens their spirits, and presses upon their hearts. From this springs the great spiritual conflict in which the people of God are incessantly engaged—which lies in the "flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," in backwardness to prayer, in incapability of delight in divine things, in a disposition to "cleave to the dust," in want of love to the Saviour, and of consecration to His service and His kingdom. These things, not a mere departure from the

cold formalities of life, good men mourn over, and find in them the occasion for daily confession and humiliation before God. From these, then, departed saints are free; the moral struggle has ceased; the warrior has laid aside his armour, and waves the palm of victory; and whilst pollution has been washed away, so sorrow, its dire accompaniment, has inflicted its last pang, for "God Himself wipes all tears from their eyes"—

"Servant of God, well done!  
Rest from thy loved employ:  
The battle fought, the victory won—  
Enter thy Master's joy."

When true religion takes possession of the heart, it influences the whole man; it reconstructs his principles, his habits, and his tastes. It breathes into him, possibly stealthily and by degrees, or it may be more promptly, a new life, and gives a higher direction to his powers. It is not at all unusual for intelligent persons to wonder at the indifference which is evinced by men of enlightened piety to the ordinary recreations and pleasures of life—to the gaieties and pastimes of the world. A little consideration, one should think, would clear away their difficulty. A new principle brings with it an expulsive power, and higher tastes displace those which have previously prevailed. As religion affects the whole man, it must embrace the social element which distinguishes him; and hence the fresh channel along which his preferences flow. The company of the profane, the listless, the indifferent, with the pursuits they prefer, becomes insipid, if not offensive, to truly devout men; they choose neither them nor their ways. They know how to behave in general society, how to carry, without obtruding it, the spirit of their religion into every walk of life, but still their chosen associates are the men of God—those who take pleasure in themes which cheer and elevate their own breasts—"who speak often one to another, while the Lord hearkens and hears; and a book of remembrance is kept for them that fear the Lord, and

that think upon His name." This social element, sanctified by divine grace, attends them beyond the grave, fits them for the society of the blessed, and the company of the redeemed. Our departed friend, whose decease we improve, whose heart sometimes "burned within" him while he talked with his companions by the way, and who has passed the threshold of eternity, is no stranger there; he is like a child at home; he had communion with the spirits of the just before he met them; he had attuned his harp to its high melodies in this outer court, and now sweeps its chords amidst spirits of congenial mould, while they cry, "To Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." The intellectual and social features of the heavenly state (a subject of intense interest) are, it is presumed, as much in advance of those with which we are familiar here as the moral and the spiritual; but this we know, that one exclusive and irrevocable sanction incloses the whole, for "there shall in nowise enter into it anything which defileth, or that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The moral image of God which was impressed on the soul of man as he came from the hand of his Creator has not only been marred, but totally defaced; in proof of which, wherever the light of revelation has not shone, men "have changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." The laws of senators, the maxims of sages, or the precepts of moralists, may, wherever they have prevailed, have lent a partial relief to this dark picture, but its groundwork has never been reached by them; for notwithstanding these, it is true, with relation to mankind, that "they have all gone out of the way, they have altogether become abominable, and that they do not like to retain God in their thoughts." Christianity alone carries within it the remedy for this awful defection. Whenever it is

cordially embraced, the great work of renovation begins, and the likeness of God is germanently wrought ; the divine lineaments are, however faintly, reimpresed, and the believer is "renewed in the *spirit* of his mind." "Of His own will," says the Apostle James, "begat He us through the Word, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." But this sanctification of our fallen nature, wrought by the blessed Spirit of God, is at best but partially effected here. The elements, both within and without, are unfavourable to it ; everything thwarts and retards it. There are ten thousand disturbing causes ; so that the impression which is made by the truth upon the heart is perpetually dissipated and broken. There is no compactness or completeness about it. It is like a landscape reflected from a wave, consisting in scattered hues and lines, rather than in a placid whole. The longest life, the most varied experience, with the most conscientious discipline, presents it only in part ; so that the aged Christian goes down the declivity of life, and enters the valley of death, mourning over his deficiencies, rather than rejoicing in his fulness. The holiest men die as sinners, not as saints, and end their career where they began it, at the foot of the Redeemer's cross. As they sink in the deep waters of human extremity, their cry is "Lord, save, or we perish !" But, in the instance of departed saints, this renovating process is completed ; the last touch has been given to the glorious work by the Divine Limner. The spirit is not merely free from pollution, but is perfected in holiness. Not a thought, not an affection, not a desire out of place, but a deep and divine harmony—the result of the highest attainment of humanity, and an entire conformity to the Divine nature and will—the finite mind reflecting as vividly as can be the attainable image of the infinitely blessed God—

"O happy hour ! O blest abode !  
 I shall be near and like my God ;  
 And flesh and sense no more control  
 The sacred passions of my soul."

We do not know, nor can know till we die, what is meant by the immediate presence of God, but the spiritual perfection of disembodied saints is inherited in the midst of this ineffable glory. We have had the Divine presence with us on earth in signs and in symbols, in sacred histories and mystic visitants, in hallowed melodies and inspired prophecies, in cheering promises and in animating prospects, in the denunciations of Sinai and the infinite condescension of Calvary ; but these have been as streaks and outbursts from the opening clouds, as lights let down to guide us in the wilderness. But our brethren have gone into the proper presence of God and of the Lamb, where "there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him ; and *they shall see His face.*" To *see* God, it is presumed, is fully to realize His presence—intuitively to perceive the beauty, the glory, the grandeur, of His perfection—to understand, as far as finite creatures can, the wisdom, the harmony, the benignity, of His counsels and His ways—to behold His manifested glory, as it shines in the person of the Lamb. The Godhead must ever remain invisible, the object of devout mental contemplation, adoration, and delight. The milder, but yet more enrapturing, radiance from this ineffable presence, which gilds the realms of the redeemed, falls upon its inhabitants through the incarnate Redeemer—through Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." "Father," said the interceding Saviour, "I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold my glory." But let us pause, lest in proceeding the rebuke overtake us, "Who is this, who darkeneth counsel with words without knowledge?"

Notwithstanding all this, a glorious consummation awaits them—their attendance on the Saviour at His advent ; for "those that sleep in Jesus will God *bring with Him* ;" the restoration of their bodies from the grave ; the transformation of those "who are alive and remain ;" their public recognition by

their "Lord in the air ;" the solemnities of the final judgment ; the surrender of the mediatorial throne ; the creation of the new heavens and the new earth—themes too august for words, and too vast for thought—let us contemplate them with awe, and seek grace to anticipate them with serenity and hope ; for " Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The late Mr. Charles Burt Robinson, whose decease we record and lament, was born at Portsea, in Hampshire, in the year 1798. At an early age he was placed under the care of the Rev. J. T. Hinton, M.A. of Oxford, who kept a large and flourishing establishment in that city. Having finished his school term, he left Brentford, the residence of his parents, with a stout heart and a determined will, for Manchester, and became apprenticed there, devoting himself at this youthful stage of his life to teaching in a Sabbath-school, and to the distribution of tracts. On leaving Manchester, in 1816, he went to London. During his stay in the metropolis the question of the employment of gas for lighting our cities and towns, which began to occupy the public mind, arrested his thoughtful attention. Having mastered the subject in its principles and details, he went to Belfast, in 1822, and entered into connexion with the gas-works there. Having completed his mission to that city, he visited Leicester, in 1823, where many of the members of the Belfast Company resided. This led to his undertaking a contract for the conduct of works of the same order in this town, which, under his management and that of his brother, Mr. Henry Robinson, who survives him, have taken their place among the most prosperous and best-conducted establishments in the kingdom. The Belfast enterprise having got into difficulties, at the request of the leading managers he revisited that city, and by his characteristic energy and untiring industry, associated with



unusual business penetration, raised it from its low condition, till it has become, under his guidance, an honour to the town, and a source of wealth to its proprietors. He became interested in several establishments of a like character through the country, and attained to such eminence in his profession as to be consulted in all matters relating to it by companies needing advice throughout Great Britain and the chief Continental cities.

Such, indeed, was his adaptiveness to the solution of difficult business problems, that he received several presentations from companies not only connected with gas-works, but with canals and other departments of engineering science, who felt themselves under obligations to his great discrimination and zeal.

Order, concentration, and industry, were his leading characteristics in the commerce of life, and, combined with habitual frugality and economy, were, under Providence, the secret of his success. Few have, in these respects, set an example more worthy of the imitation of rising and enterprising youth. Activity was not so much an effort with him as an element; that which was a toil to others was to him a pastime and a pleasure. This was attributable in part, there is no doubt, to a natural briskness and buoyancy of spirits which scarcely ever failed him, and which lifted him above the influence of dulness and of sloth; but it had a deeper spring in that innate passion for *doing*, which borrows a healthful stimulus from success. A quickness of perception, united with a quiet confidence in his own judgment, occasioned a promptness of action, which lent a decision to his commercial transactions; so that while others were getting ready for the race, he was on his way; and as they were plodding along the course, he had reached the goal. While he clearly comprehended the whole of any intelligible plan, however large its proportions, which was submitted to his judgment, he had a singular aptitude for reading its details—not only the structure, but every brick in it would arrest his eye—indeed, the parts invited and secured his minutest scrutiny

under the intuitive perception that their right adjustment is the only rational way of building up the whole. So particular was he in the division of time that he seemed to the less precise to be almost the slave of punctuality and of method. The rules of a prudential economy dwelt, in his estimation, very near the precincts of the cardinal virtues, with which, however, he did not confound them ; but he had very little patience with men of desultory habits and of vague pursuits. So unusually attentive was this exemplary economist to disciplinary habits, that he kept a daily journal, by reference to which he could tell where he had spent the several hours of a long and varied life—a record which some people would not like to keep if they could. With these attributes for secular engagements, he took and filled his place in the great arena of life, succeeding in building up an ample fortune, and in adding, without designing it, to those monuments of self-help which have rendered our country so distinguished among the nations of the earth.

Having had in his youth a useful and competent education, which he found means of improving by subsequent culture, though he made no pretensions to rank among the scholars of the age, he took his place with the best-informed yeomanry of the day, cherishing a taste for sciences which he had no leisure thoroughly to pursue. He was sufficiently versed in various departments of knowledge to appreciate and delight in the productions of their distinguished exponents, so that, for several years, he was a member of the British Association, and made a point of attending its great convocations. The cast of his mind, indeed, was rather perceptive than reflective, more practical than metaphysical, whilst he had but a modified appreciation of works of imagination and of fiction, as though he thought the clouds, however stately their columns or gorgeous their hues were but perilous habitations for men, and dramatic portraitures, however elaborate, but poor substitutes for the sober realities of life. He was distinguished by the courtesy of his

manners and the urbanity of his spirit ; his carriage was that of an English gentleman, at an equal remove from coarseness on the one hand, and from affectation on the other. His sensitiveness to the good opinion of others, especially of those whom he believed to be his superiors, which was almost morbid in its degree, led him sometimes near the precincts of adulation. His backwardness to give offence induced him to delight to expatiate in the sunshine of indiscriminate smiles. He shrank from responsibility wherever it could be avoided, since this often requires great moral courage—a quality for which my deceased friend was not distinguished. But this peculiarity has less to do with mental texture than with constitutional idiosyncrasy ; it is the result not so much of disposition as of temperament, just as physical boldness or otherwise, timidity, might be evinced under some perilous accident of life. Nor must it be confounded with self-esteem, an offensive passion with which some men, who are destitute of the love of approbation, are consumed as by a delirium. He was, however, eminently social in his tendencies, and had the enviable faculty of diffusing happiness around him. Though he never had the slightest disposition to mingle with the “sallies of the convivial hour,” or to indulge in the fashionable and half-dissipating recreations of society, no one was more at home in the midst of a select circle of acquaintance and friends. At such times he had the power to lay aside the cares of business and of life, as though they had never pressed upon him with their chafing load—to enter with the ardour of passion into the innocent amusements of the young, or to listen with an intellectual zest to the bursts of sportive wit or of playful fancy. Moroseness, exclusiveness, and acerbity, were totally foreign to his nature. Detraction never dropped from his lips, nor could calumny live in his presence, while he had no relish for the idle gossip which floats on the surface of life. He was delighted to superintend, on such occasions, hospitalities in which he himself could but sparingly indulge, and would light up the circle with his smiles,

even when it was evident that languor, the accompaniment of disease, was beginning to weigh down his buoyant nature and his stalwart frame.

He seems to have cherished from an early date a sort of natural reverence for religious observances, a sentiment which preserved him from those irregularities which too frequently taint the season of youth. His interest in spiritual things grew so slowly as to be almost imperceptible to himself, but it was incessantly and tenderly nourished by the counsels, the example, and the prayers, of an affectionate mother—a lady, as many among us can testify, of unfeigned and exemplary piety. As he rose to maturity, his conviction strengthened, and his heart kindled with devout affection towards the Great Redeemer of men, and in the year 1827 he was admitted by baptism into fellowship with the Church then assembling in Harvey Lane Chapel, Leicester. His views of divine truth, formed from a diligent and delighted perusal of the Word of God, were clear and settled. He implicitly received and firmly held the true divinity of the Saviour, the all-sufficiency of His expiatory sacrifice, and full and free justification through His great work without the deeds of the law. He received the associate truth of the Deity and agency of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of His influence to the renewal and sanctification of our nature. In these and their cognate doctrines he became established as years and experience increased, and held them, with the hopes they inspire and the peace they secure, dearer than life itself. He had little taste, and less inclination, for those controversies which sometimes unsettle and distract more subtle and speculative minds. “He believed in the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” and he “*knew* in whom he believed.” He enjoyed it, and lived upon it as upon the bread of life, and left others to cavil and to question. His religion was pre-eminently that of the closet and of the heart; he communed with His divine Master in the way of thought and of prayer, and experimentally understood the import

of the Apostle's assertion, "To you that believe He is precious." This was the secret of his stability and of his progress in the divine life, and of that eminence he attained in the estimation of others, in the service and kingdom of Christ. He took great delight, in select circles, in religious conversation; and having a mind richly stored with evangelical ideas, drawn from the true sayings of God, or from the sacred hymnology of the Church of Christ, he would sustain it with an interest which became contagious to all about him, "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." His life corresponded with his creed, and lent additional lustre to the cloud of witnesses which attests that the doctrines of grace—so far from leading to licentiousness—are "doctrines according to godliness."

Soon after his union with the Church, at the period just named, he, with an esteemed colleague, who survives him, was called to office in it; nor will the writer forget, to the latest day of his life, the noble and truly Christian conduct of these brethren, in a season of great perplexity and trial. His singular aptitude to business, his passion for order, associated with a love of despatch, admirably adapted him to the specific duties of the position he sustained; while his zeal for the promotion of the best interests of the Church invested with sanctity the secular attributes with which he was endowed. Those of us who co-operated with him for the third part of a century, and others who were linked with him for a shorter season, can bear witness to the urbanity, the ability, and the kindness, which uniformly stamped his official life: he "used the office of a deacon well, purchased to himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." The censoriousness, the dictation, and the haughtiness, which men of feebler judgment and of fainter piety are said sometimes to evince in their official course, were at an almost infinite remove from him; an element of unfeigned Christian esteem pervaded his

intercourse with those with whom he deemed it his happiness to act ; he presented a model, as a deacon of a Christian Church, in the esteem of his colleagues, which it would be difficult for the hand of the sculptor to improve. To that unbroken harmony, to which he greatly contributed, which subsisted among those appointed to official positions through so many years is to be, under God, ascribed that good degree of peace and of prosperity which it has pleased Him to vouchsafe to the religious community which has been so heavily bereaved. His example was as steady as his counsels were wise. He was never out of his place. In meetings for social worship, which he thought it alike a duty and a privilege to attend, he was always seen, aiding them as long as he could by his voice, and when this was denied him, encouraging others by his presence. He was not to be seduced to scenes of recreation when the hour of prayer arrived. He had too high a sense of the dignity of his profession, and of the sacred obligations it involved. He seemed to live and move in the House of God ; his love to it was always fresh ; a sort of youthful undying ardour, a lambent flame, which adapted him while here to the serener pursuits of the region into which he has so recently passed.

But to know the deceased most intimately, it was requisite to see him at home, amidst the ease and the repose of domestic life. With a marked faculty for controlling, and somewhat rigid ideas of government, he had the happy art of winning the obedience he required ; his carriage towards those about him was such as to render service not simply a duty, but a pleasure. He had none of those petty and harsh airs, which are as bad in feeling as they are incorrect in taste, which some put on towards those who may occupy inferior positions to themselves. His servants regarded him not only as a master, but looked up to him as their friend. No tears that have fallen upon his grave are, in my esteem, more honourable to him than those which have

been shed by them. His spirit towards the humblest member of his household resembled that of the centurion in the Gospel, who pleaded with the Saviour for "a servant who was dear unto him, who was sick and ready to die." I regard it as one of the highest encomiums that can be pronounced on him, that he exerted a kind of patriarchal influence as the master of his house. It is not for me to descant on the manner in which he filled up the nearest and the dearest relationship of home; this ground is sacred to silence and to sorrow. But as for his brethren, and those bound to him by the ties of blood, not a frown ever gathered towards them on his brow, nor a rebuke ever fell from his lips; he was always guiding and counselling them, or being guided and directed by them; their loss is not to be made up this side the grave. The youthful branches of the families which bear his name are especially bereft. His interest in their welfare was incessant, and his prayers unfeigned and fervent; will they not tread in his footsteps, give heed to his example, and in the secrecy of the closet cry to Him who waits to hear, "From this time Thou art our Father and the Guide of our youth"?

While few men could be more free from narrow and sectarian views, he was a conscientious and consistent Nonconformist, and a liberal contributor to the religious and philanthropic institutions which commended themselves to his judgment. He devoted energy and money, for many years, to the maintenance of a system of tract distribution, on a very extensive scale; delighted in the relief of the destitute, and in the support of all local efforts to do good. His interest in the great cause of Christian missions was always deep and earnest, and remained unabated to the last. Two years ago he gave a donation of five hundred pounds to the Baptist Missionary Society; early last year he sent to the Committee a further gift of one thousand pounds; in October last he sent anonymously two thousand

pounds more ; and now a legacy of two thousand five hundred pounds awaits the same treasury. Though not at all ambitious of public distinction, at the suggestion of his discerning fellow-townsmen, he was appointed, a few years since, one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace ; and, since then, he was chosen as a director of one of the oldest and most important banking institutions in Leicester, both of which positions he filled with his characteristic ability and zeal.

After enjoying unusual health for many years, and occupying a large and varied sphere of action, it became apparent to his friends that some latent disease was gradually acquiring force, and threatening to shorten his valuable life. By degrees it became so formidable as to baffle the wisest and the best medical skill, till, after a lengthened season of prostration, he died at the Shrubby, his residence, to which he was much attached, on the 15th of March, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. The last religious service he attended was a meeting for united prayer on the mournful occasion of the demise of the late lamented Prince Consort.

Having exemplified through a long life the practical tendency of those great truths, which were his chosen theme in health, and his firm support amidst weakness and decay, he has descended to his grave leaving a widowed heart to mourn his loss, attended by the regret of a large circle of relations and friends, and by the esteem of the inhabitants of the town at large. " But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-



angel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."



